



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney
District of Maryland*

*Thomas M. DiBiagio
United States Attorney*

*Vickie E. LeDuc
Public Information Officer*

*6625 United States Courthouse
101 West Lombard Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2692*

*410-209-4800
TTY/TDD: 410-962-4462
410-209-4885
FAX 410-962-3091
Vickie.LeDuc@usdoj.gov*

**January 8, 2003
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FOR FURTHER
INFORMATION CONTACT
VICKIE LEDUC, AUSA
(410) 209-4885**

**FORMER SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION EMPLOYEE SENTENCED
FOR BRIBERY**

GREENBELT, Maryland - Thomas M. DiBiagio, United States Attorney for the District of Maryland, announced today that Richard Farmer, age 31, of Mitchellville, MD was sentenced today by Judge Peter J. Messitte to serve one year and one day in prison for accepting bribes in return for processing and providing social security cards and numbers to people who are otherwise unqualified to receive them, and to conspiracy to provide false information to the Commissioner of Social Security.

On October 16, 2003, Farmer entered a guilty plea to counts one and two of a Second Superseding Indictment which charged him with accepting a bribe and conspiracy to provide false information to the Social Security Administration. According to the factual stipulation submitted as part of the plea agreement, on January 29, 2003, at approximately 4:00 p.m., two undercover Montgomery County Police officers approached a car parked in the parking lot where a branch office of the Social Security Administration is housed, after their attention was drawn to the two individuals seated in the car. The driver of the vehicle, Orphee Rekoula consented to a search of the

vehicle and the officers found 10 completed form SS-5 Social Security card applications and 24 Social Security Administration receipts for social security card applications. Farmer was also in the car. Farmer and Rekoula both admitted that they were involved in schemes to obtain social security cards and numbers for persons who otherwise would not qualify for the issuance of a social security card. The scheme involved Rekoula paying Farmer \$200 for each social security card application he submitted. After receiving the social security card application, Farmer entered the information into the Social Security Administration's computer database. The computer would then generate a receipt indicating that an application had been accepted and that a social security number would be generated for the applicant within two weeks. During the course of the scheme, Rekoula submitted between 30 to 40 SS-5 applications to Farmer and paid Farmer approximately \$8,000. Several of the fraudulent social security cards were mailed to various individuals in Maryland and throughout the United States.

Codefendant Rekoula pled guilty and was sentenced on August 1, 2003 to 6 months incarceration. A second codefendant, Alex Acheampong, pled guilty and was sentenced on August 21, 2003 to two years incarceration and a \$4,000 fine. According to the statement of facts associated with Acheampong's plea agreement, Acheampong advised people within the African community that he could obtain, for a fee, valid social security cards and numbers for people unqualified to receive them. Acheampong paid Rekoula \$400 for each SS-5 application, Rekoula kept \$200 for himself and paid Richard Farmer the other \$200.

The case was investigated by the Social Security Administration, Office of Inspector General and was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Bryan E. Foreman.